On Pamplin School

Board defines position

Editor's Note: The following information was submitted by the Appomattox County School Board in reference to the possibility of closing the Pamplin Elementary School at the end of this school session:

Since the 1976-77 school session student enrollment in the public schools in Appomattox County has declined. In 1976-77, 2650 students were enrolled. This year 2585 are enrolled. This is a decrease of 265 students. In the year 1989-90 it is projected that student enrollment will be 2128 students. A decline in student enrollment is a general trend in Virginia and throughout the country.

Because of this decline in student enrollment, it became clear to the school board that changes would be required if the system continued to operate efficiently. A study of the school system last year by the school board, administrators and various committees revealed two areas which needed immediate attention. One included the possible closing of the Pamplin School at the end of the 1981-82 session. The other area included making permanent improvements to the schools in the Town of Appomattox which serve elementary pupils. The purpose of the improvements would be to achieve energy efficient facilities.

A Buildings Survey Committee was appointed by the school board last year. The committee conducted the study and recommended to the school board that action be taken as soon as possible to secure funds to renovate Appomattox Primary, Appomattox Elementary and Appomattox Middle Schools. The school board approved this recommendation and received authorization from the Board of Supervisors to submit applications for Literary Loans from the State Board of Education at 3% interest. Final authorization from the Board of Supervisors will be required before initation of any of the improvement projects.

Enrollment information compiled last year and up-dated at the beginning of this school session indicated that the 147 Pamplin students could be accomodated in the elementary schools in the Town of Appomattox beginning with the 1982-83 session without increasing the pupil-teacher ratio. The school board has conducted a public hearing and presented information to the Pamplin P.T.A. to inform the public of reasons for considering the closing of the Pamplin School. A number of questions were asked at the Pamplin meeting and the public hearing and definitive answers were given. However, the board desires to provide answers to questions for all the citizens of the county.

How will the school system save $100,000 during the first year Pamplin is closed?

The schools in the Town of Appomattox will accommodate the Pamplin students beginning in 1982-83 with little or no additional expenses for transportation and facilities. To keep the Pamplin School open would require the same number of personnel and the same operational costs as is required during the present school session, plus inflation. With the students moved from Pamplin School there will be four less teaching positions at a savings of $52,000, a reduction of one secretary at a savings of $9,000, a savings in library services of $5,000, a savings of $10,000 for a part-time principal, a savings of $15,000 for utilities and a reduction of two teacher aides at $9,000. This represents a total savings in operational cost of $100,000.

Will the educational opportunities for Pamplin students be comparable in the schools in the Town of Appomattox?

Appomattox Primary and Appomattox Elementary are not considered large schools. However, the size of the schools does enable the school board to provide additional services efficiently which cannot be provided at Pamplin. Examples include a school nurse, physical education teachers and a comprehensive program of special education. Also, at each grade level there are six or seven classes. At Pamplin there is only one class per grade. With more than one class per grade, teachers have opportunities to work together to provide a variety of effective experiences for students and to pool resources to benefit students. Likewise, students have an opportunity to broaden their horizons and to enrich their experiences through associations with other students. The quality of education is good in each of the schools and this will continue whether the Pamplin students are transferred or whether they remain in Pamplin.

Why can't the Pamplin School continue to operate without major renovation of the facility?

Renovation of the facility is not a major factor being considered by the school board relative to closing the school. The operational savings of $109,000 in 1982-83, of $144,000 in 1983-84 and of $187,000 in 1984-85 is more than ample justification to consider closing the school. However, the facility was constructed in the late 20's and early 30's. Because of age alone, the building is in need of major renovation and it is the responsibility of the school board to inform the citizens of the county that to renovate the facility to achieve minimal standards will cost an estimated $135,000.

Is it reasonable to transport kindergarten and other young children from the Pamplin area to the schools in the Town of Appomattox?

The distance children will travel from the Pamplin area to the schools in the Town of Appomattox is no greater than the distance other children travel who live in Bent Creek, Stonewall and County-line areas of the county. The distance children travel on school buses in this county is much less than that of children in many other school divisions in Virginia. Many children who live on the outlying area of the Pamplin community will actually leave home later in the morning and be returned earlier in the afternoon from the Appomattox schools since there will not be the lost time of loading and unloading children at the Pamplin School.

Why is the School Board considering the closing of Pamplin School?

It is not an easy task for any person or body to consider closing a school. A school becomes a vital part of a community and it is understandable that most persons in a community will strongly object to the closing of their school. However, in a period of rapid change which has brought about a demand for additional educational services, efficiency in the operation of the school system and a tightening of budgets from every level, the school board would be derelict in its responsibility if it did not present the facts as they exist regarding the school system. The board is charged by State Law to "provide for the consolidation of schools whenever such procedure will contribute to the efficiency of the school division."

There are two basic reasons why the school board is considering closing Pamplin School at the end of 1981-82. The first reason is that the schools in the Town of Appomattox will accommodate the students and that the educational opportunities and services will be equal to, if not greater, than at the Pamplin School. The second reason is that the school system can operate more efficiently with Pamplin closed, resulting in a savings of $109,000 during 1982-83.

We appreciate the support of citizens of this county which has contributed to the quality of the educational system. We are working to continue progress toward educational excellence and this can only be achieved with your support and participation in the total school program. We shall welcome your involvement and suggestions.

Signed,
Appomattox County
School Board

Hollywood news

By MARY BAGBY

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he would send labourers unto his harvest. Luke 10:2.

Mr. and Mrs. George Inge of Chester, Va. visited their sister, Mrs. Virgie Inge Beasley Saturday and attended the Railroad Festival at Appomattox.

Mrs. Iva Covington, Mrs. Emma Lemon and Mrs. Kenneth Deaner spent Monday with Mrs. Mary Bagby, Mr. and Mrs. Whit Woodall visited in this home Monday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Banton of Ashland, Ky. spent a few days in Appomattox visiting relatives and friends and they and Mr. Elmo Banton of Mechanicsville attended the Railroad Festival in Appomattox during the weekend.

Mr. Myrt Mann of Gretna visited his daughter, Mrs. Marvin Glover, Jr. and family over the weekend. He called in the home of Mrs. Mary Bagby Saturday a.m. on his way to the Railroad Festival.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Webb of Appomattox and Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Banton of Ashland, Ky. were visitors Sunday evening of Mr. Walker and Richard Webb and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott Sheets have returned home after visiting relatives and friends in Ohio.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Woodson spent Tuesday with Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Webb and Miss Joyce Webb.

Mr. James Webb and daughters, Becky and Brandy Webb were luncheon guest Sunday of Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Webb. The Monroe Webbs visited in the home of Mr. Richard Webb and family Wednesday afternoon. They called in the Bagby home Thursday.

Mrs. James Conner was a visitor of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Coleman last week.

We were glad to hear Mr. Jessie Torrence, Jr. of Richmond is home from the hospital. We pray he may soon be feeling better. We are glad to hear Mr. Vernon Torrence is improving nicely after getting one of his fingers badly cut.

Mrs. L. H. Watson, Sr. spent last week in Waynesboro.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott Woodall visited his father, Mr. Thomas Woodall and family Sunday.

Mrs. W. H. Wingfield spent Monday in Lynchburg visiting relatives.

Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Cawthorn of Pompano Beach, Fla. attended the Railroad Festival with Mr. and Mrs. Donald Webb and Mr. Steve Cawthorn, and family.

Mrs. Phyliss Davis of Scottsville spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Andy Davis and daughter, Robin. Mr. and Mrs. Davis and Robin attended the Forest Festival in Buckingham Saturday.

Visiting Mrs. Mary Bagby Sunday afternoon were Mrs. Jerry Kendricks, Kenny, Jeff and Jody Kendricks, Mr. and Mrs. James Woodall, Mrs. James Maxwell, Mrs. Andy Davis and Robin, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Woodall, Katherine and Julia Wingfield and the Thomas Woodalls. Mr. Kenneth Deaner spent Thursday afternoon with Mrs. Bagby.

Mrs. Irene Watson and daughter, Mrs. Betty Justis of Appomattox spent the weekend of Oct. 9 in Phenix, Ariz. with Mrs. Watson's son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. George Watson. The occasion for this surprise visit was the opening of Mr. Watson's plant of which he is vice president and manager. On Sunday, Oct. 11 Mr. Watson's wife celebrated his birthday.

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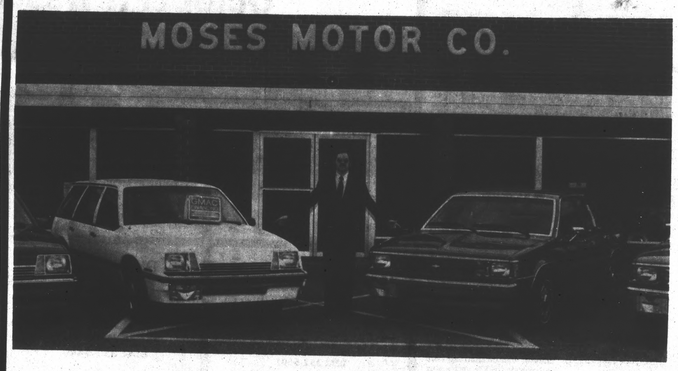

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Letters from Pamplin residents

Editor:

As a concerned citizen of Appomattox County and as a concerned parent of a child in Pamplin Elementary School, I would like to ask a few questions and also make a few comments to the people of Appomattox County.

First: I do not want the Pamplin Elementary School closed however if the Pamplin school is in such dis-repair as to be unsafe and the boiler (according to Mr. Walton and associates) is apt to blow up any moment then why in the world isn't the school closed down right now!!! I was under the impression that in order for the school to be accredited that an inspector from the State Board of Education had to inspect the building and also the building had to be inspected for fire hazard and etc. before the school could be opened for the year. If this has been done and if all these things are true then someone isn't doing their job properly.

Second: At the meetings that we have had regarding this matter all the Mr. Walton and School Board has presented us are facts and figures on how much they will save when the school is closed. When busing was brought up it was turned irrelevant since Mr. Walton and associates say there will be very minimal loss or gain money wise. When questioned about number of students on buses and how long they will be riding on the bus it was turned irrelevant and they wouldn't answer question? When Mr. Walton's figures were questioned he mentioned an architect and the architect said his figures were conservative. When PTA brought up their own estimates on this work they were brushed aside. I have never seen such evasion of facts, side stepping the issues, and turning questions irrelevant because they don't deal with only economics but because those questions dealt with our children.

When asked what would happen to 109,000 dollars (which is about what they spend in schools in one week) or less than 2% of the total 5.1 million dollar budget for the Appomattox County Schools; no answer was given. Mr. Drinkard said that this would be saved on our taxes. Does the school board mean that our taxes will go down because of closing of school or that our taxes will not go up if we close school and again issue was evaded. How can the School Board justify saving 109,000 dollars by closing Pamplin Schools while they are spending 1,025,645 dollars in renovating the Appomattox Schools and not of this figure 300,000 dollars is being spent on renovating the Appomattox Middle Schools auditorium which has been condemned. Literary loans were applied for for the renovation of these schools; however when asked why couldn't a literary loan be applied for, for Pamplin School, Mr. Walton said it was irrelevant because we are talking about saving money. If the school closing is only presently under consideration why did Mr. Drinkard say at the meeting Sept. 29 "if you wanted to vote tonight I would vote to close it" and when asked question why not talking monetary value I am talking quality education." Mr. Drinkard replied "I don't see any difference I went to Vera School" and this is the man who represents Glover Hill and no decision has been made; it certainly sounds like to me that someone mind has been made up already. Are these public meetings designed not the hear comments about the education of the children but to only appease the Pamplin people. I would honestly like to know the truth!!!!

A very interested parent
L. H. Webber

PTA president speaks out

Editor's note: The following was presented to the Appomattox school board at their last meeting and submitted to the Times-Virginian for publication.

Through the month of September, the School Board has met twice with the public. The first on Sept. 15 when we had a PTA meeting in Pamplin (where Only PTA members could be recognized) and the second at a Public Meeting at the Appomattox Court House, Sept. 29.

As you may recall, at the PTA meeting, the Objectives of the Organization were presented. When a vote was taken, concerning the consideration of the school closing, the PTA of Pamplin Elementary School voted and went on record as opposing such an act. As President of the Pamplin Elementary PTA, representing 166 members, I would like to make the following statement:

We have heard your presentation - twice! Both times, we have studied your budget projections of student enrollment through the 80's.

We consider your budget projections for the Pamplin School's functioning for the next three years, unclear. Especially when we compare these with our own figures that were presented to you at the public meeting on Sept. 29.

We still question your figures, regarding the needed repairs of the Pamplin Elem. School Building. This is based on your estimates presented at the PTA meeting and also the statements made by your engineer and architect at the public meeting. This is in contrast to our own estimates and also the State Fire Marshall's inspection and statements regarding the Pamplin Elementary School Buildings.

From the State Fire Marshall's Verbal report, on tape and now transcribed, "The building is in pretty good shape..The boiler was inspected in June 1981, by a licensed qualified state boiler inspector and it is his opinion that the boiler meets full requirements of the state law for a pressure vessel, and he has issued a certificate to that effect."

There were no statements at the meeting with the State Fire Marshall regarding the need of a new boiler, dangling and bare wires, or the need for a fire door. Nothing was said about the need for the cafeteria to be repaired. His main concerns were the hallways being cleared and passable, some drapes either being taken down or flame-proofed, gas being taken out of the lawn mower and tractor while they were being stored, and replacing bulbs that had blown out in the EXIT lights. His comments made during the public meeting concerning the safety of the building, though not from the lips of the school board, but statements of individuals assigned by them to look at the building, now on tape and being transcribed, have painted a bleak picture of the condition of the Pamplin Elementary School and as some have felt, tantamount to "a bomb scare!"

After the inspection of the Pamplin Elementary School by the State Fire Marshall, we find a great discrepancy with the comments made (and not refuted by the School Board) during the public meeting on Sept. 29. Therefore, we also question the implication of inaccuracies concerning our estimates, by the individuals assigned by the School Board who have looked over the building, since there was no refuting of their statements.

The PTA has been consistently, been confronted with the formula of economics and our questions concerning the children irrelevant.

We are concerned about the enculturation process of the student body from one environment to the other, the busing issues, their routes and the transporting of young children to Appomattox with high school students. We are concerned about their exposure to disciplinary problems on the buses. Problems, which no 5 or 6 year old has had little need to be exposed to until this time. We feel these questions have not been answered.

We are still, after 2 meetings; one a PTA meeting at Pamplin, and one a public meeting at the Appomattox Court House, unable to see the rationale behind saving money by closing the Pamplin Elementary School and spending the OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS presently under consideration through grants and low interest loans for repair and renovation work to be done at three of the Appomattox County Schools. How can it be advantageous to close the Pamplin Elementary School, when the Pamplin School only receives 2% of the over 5.1 millondollar budget for the Appomattox County Schools, while you (the school board) are spending the equalvant of about 20% of the budget on renovation?

On projection of student enrollment according to the 1980 school census, though your figures are suggesting an enrollment decline, there are many "ifs" that could disrupt such projections, such as industry coming into the county, the continued transition from city to rural, the birth rate, and also, the families who have and who probably will continue to move into this county. There are several children, mine included, who have not been counted on the 1980 school census. Our research of other school systems has revealed how such "ifs" as these can drastically change projections.

How can our children receive a better education at Appomattox Schools when the test scores (SRA-4th grade tests) show 6 out of 7 years Pamplin students have out scored the Appomattox students.

Why aren't all of these things being taken into consideration, along with economics, in the decison to close Pamplin Elementary School or to keep it open.

The Pamplin Elementary PTA would like to make the following appeal to the School Board: before making a decision on the closing of the Pamplin Elementary School, review again your budget and re-evaluate the legitimacy of a considered school closing. Though your presentation has been based on economics, we still make an appeal of consideration of an entire community school being moved, the present and future disciplinary problems on the school buses, the possible discipline problems arising in the schools because of this move and the high quality of education and environment that we presently have in the Pamplin Elementary School. Also, after first having taken all of these things into consideration, have another public meeting where questions regarding the children will NOT be termed irrelevant. It is our understanding from quotes from newspaper articles and recordings of past meetings that the school board would have public meetings! Pursuit More than the one we have had so far. Before you schedule your next one - please take all of this into consideration and term "Children!" as relevant to the situation! Thank you.

The above statement was given to the School Board at the regular school board meeting Oct. 6, 1981 at the School Board Office.

Sincerely,
Diane Seibert

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The family room is shown with a fireplace and deck access and there is a laundry and half bath adjacent. Double-side entry garage access is from here and the storage is adjacent.

The country kitchen includes an eating area and built-in appliances are shown.

The four bedrooms up have good closet space and bath access, the master having a compartmented bath with dressing room and twin lavatories.

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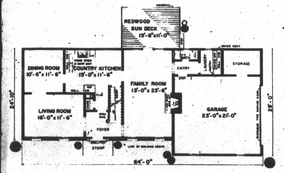

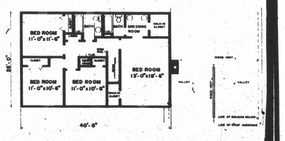

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